



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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## Testimony

### ***In Support of Raised Bill No. 5453 An Act Concerning Smoking In Motor Vehicles***

*Public Health Committee*

*March 2, 2016*

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, and Representative Srinivasan, and all other distinguished members of the Public Health Committee:

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Raised Bill 5453, An Act Concerning Smoking in Motor Vehicles.

As you know Speaker Sharkey appointed a working group last year to look at the issue of Smoke Exposure to Minors in Cars. Our report has been presented to your committee and I believe that it clearly illustrates the lack of commitment by the state of Connecticut in addressing the dangers of second hand smoke to our children. Also the report addresses the lack of any true efforts to do something about this significant public health concern. The report urges our state to do more in reducing the effects of the number one cause of death in the United States.

I believe that we all know that effects of smoking are incredibly detrimental to one's health. An unfortunate reality is that smoking is not only hazardous to the smoker, but also to those in close proximity. All too often the people most impacted by second hand smoke are the children of smokers. Second hand smoke can cause many often-serious health challenges for children. According to the Center for Disease Control, secondhand smoke increases risks of severe asthma, respiratory infections, ear infections, and even sudden infant death syndrome.

The effects of secondhand smoke are exacerbated when it occurs in a poorly ventilated motor vehicle. This bill will help protect our most vulnerable from what can be long-term health problems. HB 5453 serves to protect the health and safety of our state's children.

Many might say that this is an overreach by government, or that this law is infringing upon personal freedoms. This law alone does not provide law enforcement a reason to pull somebody over. Smoking in a vehicle while a minor is present would be a secondary offense and not a primary reason to be stopped. I also ask you to remember that the state of Connecticut stepped up and protected our smallest and youngest citizens with past seat belt and car seat safety regulations – this is a logical next step.

Louisiana, Arkansas, California, and Maine, Oregon, Utah, Vermont, and Puerto Rico have already passed legislation that is consistent with HB5453. Nothing presented in this bill is unprecedented. Please support the well being of our state's children and support HB 5453. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Noreen Kokoruda  
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